

## In Australia, opera is designed for kids with autism



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Children with autism often experience social settings in a different way to those not on the spectrum and sometimes end up having to avoid them altogether. In the past, we've seen [Squag](#), the social network for young people with developmental difficulties. Now [Victorian Opera](#) in Melbourne has piloted a series of performances that cater for the needs of young kids with autism.

Visiting the theater can be an upsetting event for those with autism, for whom scary characters and settings can trigger anxiety and long durations of sitting can feel restrictive. Victorian Opera has developed a performance of Hansel and Gretel that is tailored for kids with the condition, as well as those with Down syndrome or sensitivity to loud noises and darkness.

The show features low sound levels and the house lights aren't turned all the way down. Tickets are restricted to two-thirds of the hall's capacity, giving the audience more space to move around during the performance. They can even leave and enjoy a chill out space outside the auditorium if they wish. A narrator guides kids through the story, while each actor introduces themselves at the beginning of the play before they get into character, and none of the performers wear makeup.

The show was created as part of a program developed by [Arts Centre Melbourne](#) and [Arts Access Victoria](#). Are there other types of performances that could be tailored to those with special requirements?

Website: [www.victorianopera.com.au](http://www.victorianopera.com.au)

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